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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixty-ninth year

Identical letters dated 21 July 2014 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

The atrocities and heinous crimes that continue to be perpetrated by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian civilian population in the Gaza Strip compel me to write to you again to appeal for urgent action by the international community to bring an end to this Israeli aggression and save innocent civilian lives.

An immediate ceasefire is needed to put a halt to the war crimes and human rights violations being committed with impunity by the Israeli occupying forces against the besieged and suffering Palestinian civilian population in the Gaza Strip. We recognize the regional and international efforts being exerted towards a ceasefire, including the important support and efforts by the Secretary-General and the calls by the Security Council for a ceasefire, and appeal for greater efforts to help bring an end to the bloodshed and destruction.

For the fourteenth day, Israel, the occupying Power, has continued its airstrikes and artillery assaults on densely populated civilian areas throughout the Gaza Strip. Today, Israeli occupying forces brutally killed multiple members of three extended Palestinian families: a family of 11 persons in Rafah, a family of 26 persons in Khan Younis and a family of 5 persons in Gaza City. The slaughter of these families follows the massacre committed by the occupying forces yesterday, 20 July, in the Shuja'iya area of Gaza City, where more than 70 Palestinians were killed, deepening the vast trauma and horror being borne by our people under this criminal and inhumane Israeli occupation and military onslaught on civilians.

The Palestinian death toll has now exceeded 520 people. In addition, the number of injured now exceeds 3,500, so many of them severely injured and facing a life with permanent disabilities, including loss of limbs and eyesight. The ability of medical personnel to cope with the needs of the population and treat the wounded has been overwhelmed by the volume of death and injury being caused by these savage Israeli attacks and by the shortages in medicines and medical supplies that have long

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plagued Gaza owing to the illegal Israeli blockade. Further exacerbating the situation is the audacity of Israel, the occupying Power, in striking hospitals and medical facilities, including a strike on Al-Aqsa Hospital in Deir Al-Balah today, in which at least five Palestinian civilians were killed and many others injured, and extensive destruction was caused to large portions of the hospital, including the surgical and maternity wards. Such barbaric and criminal actions must invoke condemnation from the international community, and for these crimes, and all others being perpetrated against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable.

I am compelled to convey further details to you in this regard, in documentation of the vast crimes being carried out by Israel, the occupying Power, in grave breach of international law:

Israeli strikes on Gaza last night and into this morning resulted in the massacre of at least 26 members of the Abu Jami family in Khan Younis. Many more family members are feared to be under the rubble, as paramedics are not able to get to the scene, and those paramedics who have, are overwhelmed by the extent of death and destruction wrought by the occupying Power. As of now, medics have identified 13 victims of the Abu Jami family as Jawdat Tawfiq Ahmad Abu Jami (age 24), Tawfiq Ahmad Abu Jami (age 5), Haifa Tawfiq Ahmad Abu Jami (age 9), Yasmin Ahmad Salamah Abu Jami (age 25), Suhaila Bassam Abu Jami, Shahinaz Walid Muhammad Abu Jami (age 1), Rayan Tayseer Abu Jami (age 8), an elderly woman, Fatima Mahmoud Abu Jami, Rozan Abu Jami (age 14) and a neighbour, Ahmad Salhoub (age 34).

Israeli shelling has also killed 11 members of the Siyam family in Rafah, including Sumud Nasser Siyam (age 26), Muhammad Mahrous Salam Siyam (age 25), Badir Nabil Mahrous Siyam (age 25), Ahmad Ayman Mahrous Siyam (age 17), Mustafa Nabil Mahrous Siyam (age 12), Ghayda Nabil Mahrous Siyam (age 8), Sherin Muhammad Salam Siyam (age 32), Dalal Nabil Mahrous Siyam (8 months), and Kamal Mahrous Salamah Siyam (age 27), who were all pulled from beneath the rubble of their destroyed home. And five members of the al-Yaziji family, including Yasmin Nayif al-Yaziji, Mayar Nayif al-Yaziji (age 2), Wajdi al-Yaziji, Safinaz al-Yaziji, and Anas al-Yaziji (age 5), were also killed today by the Israeli occupying forces in Gaza City.

In addition to the above crimes against humanity and war crimes by Israel, at least 72 Palestinians, among them 17 children, 14 women and 4 elderly persons, were massacred by Israeli occupying forces in the Shujaiya area of Gaza, on Sunday, 20 July. Tragically, the number of human beings killed in this single attack against this civilian populated area will continue to rise, as the occupying forces are preventing the entry of medical assistance and personnel to the area, and many of the bodies of Palestinian civilians are still underneath the rubble of what was once their homes. Paramedics who were able to get to the scene of the massacre somberly stated: "There are no injured in Shujaiya, only dead".

Among the dead children from this criminal massacre in Shujaiya are Ibrahim Ammar (age 13), his brother Assem (age 4) and their sister Iman (age 9); Saji Hasan Al-Hallaq (age 4), his brother Kinan (age 6) and their sibling Mohammed (age 2); Shadi Isleem (age 15) and his siblings Alaa (age 11) and Fadi (age 10); Samia Al-Sheikh Khalil (age 3) and her sister Hiba (age13); Khalil Al-Hayyeh (age 7) and his sister Umama Al-Hayeh (age 9); Dima Isleem (age 2); Mohamad Ayyad (age 2); Rahaf Abu Jumaa (age 4); Tala Al-Attawi (age 7); Dina Hamada (age 15); Omar Hamouda (age 10); Ghada Ayyad (age 9); Marah Al-Jammal (age 11); and Marwa

Al-Sirsawi (age 3). The Palestinian children who were massacred have names, and they have mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, grandparents and friends, who are all grieving their violent deaths and are devastated by this massive loss of human life and innocence.

In addition to the children mentioned above, many more children have been brutally killed by the Israeli occupying forces since our last letter to you on 17 July 2014. In this regard, on Thursday, 17 July 2014, Fulla Tariq Shuhaibar, Afnan Shuheiber (age 8), Jihad Issam Shuhaibar (age 10) and Wasim Issam Shuaibar (age 9) were killed in an airstrike on their family home in the Sabra neighbourhood of Gaza City; Ahmad Ismail Abu Musallam (age 10), his sister Wala (age 12) and their brother Muhammad (age 15) were killed when a shell hit their bedroom in northern Gaza; Rahaf Khalil Al-Jbour (age 4) was killed by an airstrike on her home in Khan Younis; Yassin Al-Humaidi (age 4) died of injuries sustained during a strike on Gaza City; Mohammad Shadi Natiz (age 15) and Mohammed Salim Natiz (age 4) were killed by Israeli tank shelling, east of Gaza City.

Moreover, tragically, on Friday, 18 July, eight members of the Abu Jarad family, including five children, Siham Mousa Abu Jarad (age 15), Ahlam Na'im Abu Jarad (age 13), Haniyeh Abdelrahman Abu Jarad (age 3), Samih Na'im Abu Jarad (12 months old) and Mousa Abdelrahman Abu Jarad (6 months old), were killed by an Israeli missile fired into their home in Beit Hanoun, in northern Gaza. Also, on Saturday, 19 July, five more Palestinian civilians were mercilessly killed by the shelling by the Israeli occupying forces in Beit Hanoun, in northern Gaza, including four members of the Al-Zuwedi family: Mahmoud Al-Zuwedi, his wife Dalia and their two children, Nagham (age 2) and Ro'ya (age 3). The fifth family member was Mohammad Al-Zuwedi (age 20).

Amid all of this death and destruction, the humanitarian situation facing the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip is extremely dire and assistance is urgently needed. According to reports, more than 900,000 Palestinians are suffering from a lack of adequate access to water and sanitation services. Eighty per cent of the population receives electricity for just four hours a day. According to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), more than 81,000 Palestinians, the majority of them refugees, have been displaced and are seeking shelter in 61 Agency buildings. Since 7 July, at least 85 schools and 18 health-related facilities have been damaged, many extensively. At least one doctor has been killed and at least 19 medical staff injured, and at least four ambulances damaged.

Moreover, conservative estimates are that at least 72,000 children now require specialized psychosocial support due to trauma caused by the death or injury of someone they know or the loss of a home, and merely as a result of witnessing the barbaric savagery of the Israeli occupying forces. Additionally, the thousands of Palestinian children in Gaza, who constitute the majority of the civilian population, are living in terror at the deafening explosions of missiles and bombs, the sounds of bombs fired, and the bright flashes of fire from homes set ablaze by the incessant Israeli aerial bombardment and shelling of civilian areas.

We call on the international community to act now to end Israel's aggression against the Palestinian civilian population in the Gaza Strip and in all of Occupied Palestine, including East Jerusalem. Grave violations of human rights, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and State terror are being perpetrated by Israel, the occupying Power,

against the Palestinian people in the West Bank. All such Israeli crimes must end as well as measures of collective punishment and excessive and indiscriminate force against the Palestinian civilian population, including peaceful protestors demanding the end to the aggression against their brothers and sisters in the Gaza Strip.

Strong and immediate international action is required, including by the Security Council, to demand a halt to Israel's military operations and to protect civilian lives. While recognizing the importance of the emergency meetings recently held by the Council and press statements made by the President of the Council in this regard, we stress that more must be done, in line with the Council's duties and resolutions as well as international humanitarian law, to demand an end to Israel's aggression against the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip and to ensure compliance by Israel with all of its legal obligations, including with regard to the protection of civilians. The responsibilities of the international community in this regard, including the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention, are clear and must be upheld.

We continue to hope that the efforts under way by President Mahmoud Abbas with regional and international leaders will bring about a permanent ceasefire as well as a substantive and sustainable improvement in the conditions of the Palestinian people living in Gaza, including by lifting the eight-year-long illegal and immoral blockade imposed by the occupying Power, in collective punishment of 1.8 million people. The Security Council must do all that it can to save civilian lives and prevent the further exacerbation of the humanitarian situation and further destabilization by upholding its primary responsibility under the Charter to maintain international peace and security. Every moment of inaction by the international community that passes means more death, destruction and devastation for the Palestinian people. Every moment of inaction that passes means more war crimes by the occupying Power, for which Israel must be fully held accountable, with all perpetrators, including government leaders and army officials and soldiers, held responsible for their crimes against the Palestinian people. For the sake of the Palestinian people, it is our hope that history will document the actions by the Security Council to stop this Israeli onslaught against the Palestinian people.

This letter is in follow-up to our 508 letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the territory of the State of Palestine. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 17 July 2014 (A/ES-10/641-S/2014/506), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations being committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine
to the United Nations